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C. M. F. Dressel

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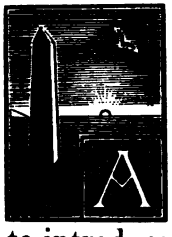
PREAMBLE.

NOTA BENE.

They are like essays,
Or miscellanies,
Yet multitopics.



A PREFACE is either the author's essoin * for the existence of his book, or his enlightening preliminary discourse, if not both, and ought to introduce, what is worthy of perusal. In this respect deficiency would be a fault, and though the recognition of an error is naught to shame for, the consciousness of its non-committance is paramount in self-satisfaction, and of benefit, not only to ourselves, but also to our fellow-beings.

With these ends in view, I declare the copulation of multi † and topics, ‡ as the book itself, to be a creation of my own. It is manifest to all versed in literature, so much is already written, that it is nearly impossible, to scribe without stumbling in the ruts‖ of other writers, with regard to the themes; but that the literary merit lies in the different workings of the subjects. The paths of learning are not new; and only who deserves genius, is capable of originality, and possessed of the requisite honor, industry, tenacity and boldness, to pass adversity and attain immortal fame.

Books contribute much to influence our actions, and therefor should be elevating in morals, and aid us, like a true friend, in present aims, or to find fresh hopes for those forsaken. Variety ever lends greater interest to work, and thus in multitopics or manytalks, as the name implies, my

* excuse. † many. ‡ talks. ‖ tracks.

inclination is towards promiscuity. Volume ought to be less important than quality, for too many works, like most orations, are not better for being lengthly. The thoughts should reflect urbanity; and the phraseology is improved by being comprehensible. To write is to be ambitious; and though a wish implies not its fulfilment, it has been my desire, to scribe a volume, destined to breathe * to posterity. I hold † the ostentatious conviction, that my lofty aim is herewith accomplished, and own ‡ to have had inspirations thereto. All it, I lived to deserve; yet it might be too venturesome, to entertain the wheedling belief, that MULTITOPICS would find universal appreciation, for tastes differ, and some despise what others delight ||; and it can hardly be otherwise, in this peculiar world, where we suffer different rearings, or are thrown upon various rocks, and retain heterogeneous impressions. However Multitopics is more diverse than homogeneous, and who find therein nothing to satiate their individual fancies, have themselves to blame for possessing a character so remote from that of myself, the author.

---

* live. † have. ‡ admit. || relish.

Respect your own honor,
Then it will move you to,
Revere that of others.

Forest Life.

BENEATH clear sky in the mountains,
Mountains high and mountains low,
There many natural fountains,
Feed the lakes whence rivers flow.

There in the lakes the fishes thrive,
And the trout, falls overbound;
There the bees in hollow trees hive,
While bears and deer gambol round.

On the mountains and the lakesides,
There the whortleberries grow;
And the blackcaps* at the rocksides,
With the breeze wave to and fro.

There among trees the pine is found,
The oak, the beech and walnut;
And ferns and fungi brighten ground,
Between birch, ash and chestnut.

There fivefingers, trail in the shade,
Of linden, spruce and maple;
And gayly flower'd is each glade,
With daisies and the thistle.

* black raspberries

There the astor and goldenrod,
And in moist spots lilies bloom;
While robins hunt worms in the sod,
And the orchids raise swamps' gloom.

There cries the owl and whip-poor-will,
And the hop-toad speeds along;
Where the willow grows at the rill,
And insects chirp all night long.

There the morning's early calling,
Finds pretty wren and blackbird,
And the mockingbird asinging,
With the red, and yellow-bird.

There the rabbit unmolested,
And the squirrels prance about;
While the dove is snugly nested,
When gold sunset shuts day out.

In the mountains' lovely forests,
There the strawberries ripen;
And neat brown eagles build their nests,
High, where clouds never thicken.

There the woodcock lives in the brake,
Near a batch of hickory;
While clinging on trees is the grape,
By where grows the blackberry.

There the crows are often cawing,
From the elm trees near the mound;
And the katydids are squeaking,
When mushrooms spring from the ground.

There the snakes glide through the thicket;
While at lakeside cries the loon,
And is heard the chirp of cricket,
At the rising of the moon.

There the shumac with red berries,
The buttercups and primrose,
The mountain-laurel and cherries,
Thrive not far from the wild-rose.

At the ponds the frogs are croaxing,
Croaxing to their mates a tale;
And the violets are growing,
In damp soil where slides the snail.

Ladybirds* live in the open,
Where the hazels form a hedge;
And arrowheads† grow in the fen,
Where the quail drinks among sedge.

Over tree-stumps and fallen log,
Lightly skips the butterfly;
While at the elders near the bog,
Gladly flits the dragonfly.

* a species of beetle † plants

The woods' obscurity at night,
  Is relieved by light-beetles,
Or by the stars and planets bright,
  And earth-shine,* while dew settles.

In the opens dandelions,
  Thrive with carrot, wild yet neat;
While at woods' edge rhododendrons,
  Scent the air with flowers sweet.

Where the black-eyed-Susans flourish,
  With the catnip and milkweeds,
Or the trefoils the bees nourish,
  There the wind rings bluebells' seeds.

The anemones and wintergreen,
  The tulip-tree and aspen,
Live in woods, where with moss is seen,
  Indian-pipes † and lichen.

On pennyroyal cover'd ledge,
  Grows sassafras and cedar;
And muskrats house at the stream's edge,
  Where sprouts a mighty poplar.

Under cornel crawls the turtle,
  Near the butternut, the chipmunk;
And rich verdure proves ground fertile,
  In the woods where roves the skunk.

* Decaying substances frequently emit a phosphorescence thus designated, and resulting from minute fungi. † fungi.

There in the marsh trail cranberries,
And the rushes have their way,
While at the rocks grow pokeberries,
'Neath the branch where hornets sway.

From the top of a hollow trunk,
A racoon takes lengthly peep;
While prowls the fox where grows the spunk,
And night's darkness is most deep.

Where the oak stands blast by lightning,
And all wet from the shower,
There is found the everlasting,
And the snapdragons, flower.

From clear spring the water trickles,
And the mints grow at it's side,
Nigh the bluff where the brook ripples,
And puffballs push sward aside.

At beavers' dam the water thuds;
And red dawn of morning fine,
Greets the woods full of scented buds:
I would forest life was mine.

Pensive Reflections.

From dust to dust,
Often many years does take,
Surely, all must,
The terrestrial forsake.

When we pass from the whirls of diurnal strifes, it is frequently with reluctance. This repugnance to leave the earth, is obviously stronger in such, as never experienced the wants of the indigent or unhealthy. Happy, undoubtedly is the person, who feels at the sunset* of this existence, a clear conscience. It is the Creator's decree, subject to His almighty power, that dust turn but to dust. The stroke which baffles being, comes to all alike, to everything earthly, and often seems unjust, because it is His will, that we see not the justice.

When we behold the dusting† mansions of the past, ponder on the possible beauty of the structures, and reflect upon the festal joys that once there held sway, we naturally picture in our imagination, the life, which our present position in society may withhold from us, and cannot but become possessed with a gloomy impression marked with a strong degree of respect. Our sentiment and fantasy then readily illustrate, a grand reception or ball, a luscious repast, a Xmas dinner, a New-Years day, an Easter, a lawn party, a wedding, etc. We imagine the fair partakers, the

* close † mouldering

frolicsome beauties, the gentle jokers, the envious lovers, the manly variety, the gracefull couples, the roasted turkies, the warming wines, the mutual pleasures of company, indeed the pictures are unlimited and, individually as differing as the refinement of the individuals.

On contemplation then, the future will bring to us, as melancholy an illustration, as time has to the visitants of the mansions nevermore. Friends, the soul of happiness, will be marked only by the headstones or other memorials on their tombs, if not by their urns, or other receptacles for the residue of their incineration, and even these doleful mementoes, will be found dispersed, proving that long before, they who are no more, had become separated from worldly companionship, some by nearer ties, others by fortune or itineration.

And once 'tis past,
Any fond recollections,
To those who last,
Come with pensive reflections.

THE INDIAN SUMMER.

When winter's chilly blasts are nigh,
And summer's sweetness claims a sigh,
The forest's trees are bared of leaves,
To carpet earth, by autumn breeze.

In the North American Temperate Zone, where the rougher change of the seasons, claims more deciduous than evergreen vegetation among the sylva, is experienced that late namesake of summer, which was the Indian's own. When the leaves drop, proving the fall, and cover the ground more than the trees, the time of autumn has come, when the Indian Summer has begun.

Then, when the forests were extensive and the clearings few, the Indian went on his hunting path, well knowing the flesh of the game to be daintiest then. The feigned learning of the Caucasion hunter, caused him to take an earlier pick of the game, during the previous, to him more congenial season, and in derision term the Redskins' time of hunting, the Indian's Summer; but the Indian while

gnawing the better meat, smiled at his paleface brother's conceit. The knotty school of experience, often transforms prejudice into admiration; thus game-laws are now open mostly during the Indian Summer. Then, the air is cool and bracing; while the woods are hovering in a silvery mist, which at sunset, frequently turns to a golden or reddish hue, coloring every bush, tree, rock, and water, 'neath a greenish sky. Atimes, the fiery haze charms the viewer after a light snowfall, while the phosphorescent moonbeams tardily follow, reflecting the icy crystal's sparkle, and enhancing the fascination of the scene.

Then the Indian's Summer 's here,
  Then on the hunt he went with cheer,
The while it lasted to make sure,
  Full winter's larder to procure.

WISDOM.

As I ponder on the lore,
That is stored in books of yore,
I think me, I am a fool,
But a blunt and useless tool.

Though with passing of the thought,
I reason that all I sought,
Can I store within my mind,
May Mnemosyne be kind.

For with study all can know,
Wisdom that is slow of flow,
And win laurels with knowledge,
Besides leave a name of edge.*

* distinction

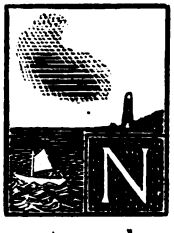
SEPARATION.

Fools — they try to mix together,
Oil, that will not join with water;
They waste time in base deception,
And taste not joys of disruption.

When their acts belie there is peace,
Then their tortures will never cease:
Their balm is to drift asunder,
Else the spell will take them under.

Naught can rules of higher sitting,
Command when they are not fitting,
Each to each, and want to be free,
When on parting they can agree.

THE SAIL.



Fate! O merciless monster!

NEAR where the saline North Atlantic Ocean waters, whether blown by tempestuous winds into landlubbers' white-caps,* or remain settled in a lull, wash the sandy, somewhat rocky eastern shore of Staten Island, forming with the western promontory of Long Island, the strip of water, connecting the inner and outer bay of New York, called the Narrows, about a hillside, lay the village of Stapleton, now consolidated with that human-hive,† the ever great American metropolis of New York.‡ In most small towns and villages, townfolk and villagers are neighbors, or everybody is acquainted with everybody; ‖ thus the inhabitants of Stapleton, all knew, that Conrad Stevens, and Frances Leighton were very fond of each other, for they were nearly always seen together. That neither had any other sweetheart, was plain to every busybody, and as they were in each others company so much, neither of themselves would

---

*crests, combs, wash etc., are names for waves with foamy apexes

†overcrowdedness, as in a bee-hive

‡Population doubled to near 3½ millions in 1896, by the addition of Kings, Richmond and parts of Queens and Westchester Counties.

‖They are wise who learn to know each other.

have had any reason for even a vague suspicion, that they were not true to each other. They were ideal lovers; indeed they must have delighted Eros. Gossip long had it, that they were engaged; but words often take wings, and then rarely fly well. Frances had attained the age, previous to which it is not meet for woman to bear the joys and pangs of matrimony, or had just passed her twentieth spring.

As a brunette of the handsomest type, a pretorian would have drawn her comparison with Venus. Her brown eyes sparkled with gentleness, her full broad forehead showed education, as did the full temples, musical inclination, the peak on her eyebrows, rythm, and her broad chin, strength of will. Her mold would have pleased the artistic eyes of Antoine Bayard, whose celebrated painting—The Joyous Band—hardly shows a more pleasing womanly figure.

Thorwaldsen would not have hesitated to compare her to the Aphrodite of Melos. Frances had womanly habits,* liked her home, and was diurnally busy in the kitchen; besides, she was modest not only in dress, but also in manners, indeed did not even believe in the liberty of dancing; thus it was no wonder, that she was the more honored and esteemed. Her aged parents were upright and associable, and lived on a small income, the blessing resultant from worthy youthful thrift; and among the flowers in the garden surrounding their own neat little cottage, Frances, as Conrad gallantly besides æsthetically reiterated, appeared by far the prettiest. The Leightons, though not rich, had reason to be proud, in being able to occupy their only child at home.† They even intimated to Frances, that if she was

* Women should spend more time to household affairs than to sportlife.

† Parents ought to keep their offspring more at home, by educational amusement and good company, as much as circumstances will afford it.

ever to be blessed with a good husband, she would not have to depend entirely on him to slave for her existence.

Conrad was as venust* as Adonis, and aged twenty-six years. His lovely mother had long departed this world; while his kind father cherished the memory of her who had been dearest to him, more than to remarry. Conrad resided with his parent an honest carpenter, and with an amiable younger sister. At the trade of his father, Conrad averaged the lowest earnings, necessary for marriage or an eagle per week; but he felt that a salary was not a steady dependence, and although he was conscientious and possessed the energy and frugality, conducive to better financial results in time, he happened to be enamored with Frances, and sweethearts are not the only persons, who unwisely detest patience.

On the last occasion of a tete-a-tete, Frances took special pains to make it evident to Conrad, that their pecuniosity would prove efficient for housekeeping, that she could do without a servant and that they could even live with her parents. Conrad was transported at the fidelity of Frances, and felt that he should propose to her, but like all men true in love, he could neither hide nor utter his sentiments.

An high afternoon sun, lighting up a fine Italian landscape, could not present to the view, a scene more pleasing than the New York Narrows backed by green Staten Island hills, as on this occasion, when a zephyr, which threatened to turn stronger, wafted summer verdure's sweet perfume about Conrad and Frances, as they stood, he a trifle taller, side by side in their finery arrayed, on a plankway, viewing a cat-boat as it lay quivering amid the rippling water.

* beautiful, from Venus the Roman mythologic goddess of beauty and love.

Conrad had built the boat himself and named it Frances, since as he explained, he felt proud of its goodness.

Frances had frequently enjoyed a sail with Conrad, who had as usually gained her consent, with the approval of her parents to another trip. Shortly they were seen seated in the boat, appearing like brother and sister, and sailing before a breeze which filled the single canvas. Frances was the first to break a long silence — "Oh! How lovely the boat speeds along." To which Conrad politely remarked, "I certainly agree with what you say, Frances, but perhaps you would not coincide to what I would say." "Conrad," said Frances, "did I ever disagree with you?" To this he retorted with an effort, "I wish you would not if I spoke as I felt." Their eyes met each others glance; and their cheeks nearly rivaled the ruddiness of the setting sun.

They understood each other, though a long silence followed before Frances timidly questioned as if in rebuke, "know we each other not long or well enough, to have no secrets." Conrad looked at her intently, but scarcely noticed, that her features were, like his own, of that innocent hue, which was then visible in the feathery clouds above him, as he almost gasped, "then sail the path of life with me." Her face even deepened in color, and a faint "yes" escaped her crimson lips, which quivered with an emotion, that was not becalmed by an endearing osculation.

Suddenly a squall capsized the boat; and it was night. Poseidon could say her last word was "fate," to which Aeolus heard him articulate "O, merciless monster!"

It is not well, that we engross ourselves in joy,
and forget the Almighty, and the lurking evils,
to which we are exposed.

An Acorn Shower.

From the acorns, grow, the oaks,
And on the oaks, the acorns.

IT is indeed a peculiar occurrence, that of an acorn shower. Let anyone tramp the forests where oaks abound, near the end of that pleasant month of the year, in which the signs of autumn first appear, and the intermixture of green, yellow, red and brown verdure evidence 'tis September, and the quaint event of an acorn-shower, will be interestingly realized. Tik, tak, tak, tik, the acorns strike the earth, then slightly covered with fallen leaves, which not only rustle in wind, but also as birds hop along to seek cocoons, and as squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, and other animals search for subsistence; while the black-snake twitches its tail among the dry foliage, in a manner creating a sound similar to the rattle of the rattlesnake.

Tik, tik, tak, the acorns drop; while the woods are yet mostly green, and resting in that grand repose, which sometimes settles on the features of aged persons, long before their end. Amid exhilarating breeze, besides the richly colored leaves of maple, dogwood, hickory, aspen, birch, schumac, etc., fall the oak-seeds,—tak, tik, tak. It is not difficult to recognize, that when the acorn shower, tik, tak, tiks, summer is done, and the forests' rest is soon to come.

Whence came at first the acorns?
They have had their Creator.

ADVICE.

COUNSEL is a capital thing; notwithstanding it is much to be feared for the doubt of its wisdom. Colloquial difference of opinion is seldom weighty; and they who are paid for advice, often have more use for their fee, than their clients benefit by a consultation.

It is youth which needs and ought to seek advice the most; for to have no knowledge of a matter, is to be fit for imposition. As age instructs youth, the young naturally incline to their elders for counsel; nevertheless they should not forget, that the aged sometimes hold too contumaciously to ideas fixed in years long past, and not in conformity with the present circumstances. Advice is frequently given intentionally, for the purpose of sending the advised in opposite directions, or to gain their confidence for ill intent; since honor succumbs much too often to acquisitiveness.

To be safe from deceit in this false world, is almost an impossibility; and if there is a person who has not been illy advised at sometime, or who has never been deceived, that person must either live away from the worldly taint as a recluse, or deservedly have angelic protection. Therefor we should be skeptical about any directions, and endeavor to weigh their value with self deductions; or if this, like

many another talent is denied us, we ought test the sincerity of our counselors in other regard. The braggart is so poor an advisor, as the impunctual are unreliable. A spring may amply serve one a long time before it fails, and so it is with advice; and the failing, though sometimes only temporary, gives rise to discredit the reliability thereafter. Verily who gives sound admonition, is thy friend; yet vile tongues exist, and without just cause, aye, without even our knowledge, friendship oft does change to enmity before the next sunrise; and worse still, that very enmity may lie concealed beneath a simulated mantle of friendship. To lose not, trust not; and to lie not promise not. When you say you will, do; and when you say you won't, don't; for truthfulness is elevating, and is one of the most valuable of talents that lead to fame. Parental elucidation is not always trustworthy; while few persons wish to assume the responsibility of recommendation; and personal introduction is considered the best reference. Experience is the foundation of the best advice; though the young may have more experience in a thing, and been more observant than the elderly.

Truly the aged, who retain their gift of youthful brightness of mind, are the best sages; and if they are not affable, it is of worth, to run the gauntlet of experience, and reap its teachings; though all learning is costly.

THE FIDDLER'S MUSE.

What care I, when all about me,
Is free from worry, all sunshine,
Whether others have loss or gain,
Have I much, or have I little,
When I dream, I dream things rosy,
What I do, I do in gladness,
But my childhood days are over.

What the bow is to the fiddle,
Truly that is man to woman,
Each a helpmate to the other,
Lonely waiting, ever ready,
To respond to heartsease music,
Eas'ly broken,* each with roughness,
With gentleness a lasting joy.

Nature rules to find a partner,
So hope I, to get a true one,
One who in makeup reflects me,
And in love cannot reject me,
One the prototype of goodness,
Who can love none other than one,
And that one alone for lifetime.

* spoiled

Such is nature pure and simple,
That fond wishes remain the same,
If fulfill'd or whether blasted,
Though in youth there is a warmness,
That with time does never return;
When the hopes of warmth are over,
'Tis too late to begin anew.

Every hope needs nourishment,
Like the roots to make plants prosper,
Else success becomes chimeral,
And all industry is needless,
Useless also without wisdom;
While without reciprocity,
Hope wanes into humility.

More frequently than is of good,
Enthusiasm, leads ambition,
Leads us to see things that are not,
To fancy, pictures in the sky,
Like the love that grows from friendship,
Hard to bear when nipt asunder;
Yet all pleasures have dislikings.

No paths are alike in smoothness,
Some are longer, others shorter,
Though some short ones are the roughest,
And some long ones are the shortest;
It depends more on the user,
Obstacles to surmount freely,
Through such Godsend as is deserv'd.

A Flagration.

The sun had disappeared below the horizon at least an hour, and the night was dark, for it was the time of the new moon in the middle December of 1894; when after a winter study of the Palisade Woods, and having visited and bid good-by to, my acquaintance Mr. Johnson, who built himself a house in these woods, I was feeling my way, along an, in the obscurity of night invisible path, leading about two miles eastward towards the Fort Lee Ferry, which I intended to take for New York City.

There was only another house in this forest, about a quarter of a mile distant and off the path, and as I passed it, I noticed, that the interior was lit up, by the gleam of lamplight passing without from an unshuttered window, and evidencing that somebody lived within. As I tardily picked my quiet way onward, in the loneliness that usually incites meditation, I could not but feel, that in this simple rustic abode, whence resounded cheerful voices of children, there was no doubt, at the very moment, more contentment than in many a palatial mansion; and that we can be poor and happy, which is better than being wealthy and unfortunate.

I heard the toot of the ferry reverberate throughout the stillness of the woods, when suddenly I saw the swamps and treetrunks before me reflect a ruddiness, which I immediately recognized, had its origin in some combustion; yet as I looked about me, all was darkness. From the

direction of the house I had shortly passed, wild shrieks of alarm reached my ears, and at almost the same instant, I beheld human figures aimlessly running about, as a pillar of flame issued from the building, and illuminated its vicinity.

The gleam which penetrated the forest, enabled me to reach the doomed structure, in a few minutes, without much difficulty, by running on a path leading thereto.

Near the building, my gaze centered for a few moments, on a small lot of household necessities huddled together, of which a sofa was the most conspicuous, and where an elderly, stocky gentleman, the pater-familias, surrounded by several ladies, children and Newfoundlands, formed a picturesque group, representing horror as well as inviting pity. The house was a two story and garret wood construction; and the blaze from the gable roof at the chimney, reddened all that was visible; though the features of the late residents seemed pallid. The distant neighbors and curious, were attracted, by the red columns of flame and smoke rising skyward, and alarming the people for miles about.

I came to the scene to help save things, and got the late owner to ax off some fences adjoining the building, and extending to a nearby woodshed, while I took some shutters from the lower windows of the burning house; but mostly, others were led thither by the fascination which a calamity creates, for they stood around, as motionless as the trees, apparently in mute astonishment, yet in reality deeply charmed by the progress of the blaze, which, as it brightened the surroundings still more, showed new arrivals at all points. In their ardor to be at the fire, parties came running, some tripped over tree-stumps or fell into ditches, others, too corpulent to run, hurried along hobbling, and yet others, came scratched by briers. The crackling of the

flames was lost for some seconds, by the audibility of the hammering on a massive iron ring nearly a yard in diameter, and suspended by a chain,from a horizontal beam supported by two posts; the sound calling the volunteer firemen, to their station about a mile away, and reminding me of the blacksmith busily pounding on the anvil of his smithy.

In the meanwhile, several willing hands, wrenched a door, I had directed attention to, from its hinges; while with the aid of a rake, I got some clothing, through the window of a ground floor bedroom. One fellow, in stature like Hercules, jumped upon the window-sill, to get inside the room and save a cot, but I pulled him down; still, in spite of others and myself, he, undaunted, would have ventured within, had not a blast of hot air coming from the window, as I closed it, cooled his zeal. In the next instant, flames began to flicker about the interior; and it occurred to me, that although perseverance is required for success, persistence can also lead to detriment. All that could be protected from the fury of the fiery elements, was saved; though it was indeed little. As I stood at a safe proximity to the former habitation, I beheld the ignescence from the collapsing of the roof, which gave evident delight to most of the now numerous spectators; but the grandeur only profounded my abhorrence of devastation. The late dwelling was now completely enveloped in the flames, which the wind fanned hither and thither in a frightful manner;and to climax* the awe inspiring destruction, the blackened chimney towering among the fierce flames, fell over crashing, and showering sparks all about. The recent inhabitant, with his ax in his left hand, his right booted leg bent resting on a log, stood near me, watching his loss;

* heighten to the uttermost

and to my inquiry as to whether he held insurance against fire, he responded in the affirmative, but added that it was not much; and then he seemed to realize, that his means would not be adequate to replace his former home; and with an agitation which shook his whole body, and a moan, he turned away from the appalling sight. Beyond the clearing of the scene, the darkness seemed to be intensified; while between the ruddy, nearest tree-trunks, promiscuous, illuminated faces, though hardly indicating any particular nationality, formed an interesting study of emotions.

Mostly, the features were those of young folks, and some indicated trepidation, some showed glee, others expressed indignation or anxiety, while a few had the nonchallance of the stoic. The clamorous commotion which presently occurred, was due to the arrival of the firemen; though I failed to see a reason for any uproar, since we oft cannot understand actions foreign to our natures. The firemen, numbering about a dozen, seemed nonplused at the headway of the fire, but very soon formed a bucket-line, for passing well-water to the woodshed, which they drenched.

The fire had now spent its force; and the burning ruins, but little warmed the chilly night; while with the darkening of the scene, there came a chaos of departure, started by the rumbling away of the fire-wagon, with its hand-pumps, pails, pick-hooks, ladders and other appendages, as drawn over the rough road, by the firemen. For a short time, the forest reechoed with the lusty voices of persons homeward-bound, searching for friends and paths, and then all was quiet. The flagration had ended with the dieing to ashes, of the glowing embers; while a long time will elapse, ere the grass thrives where rests a heap of ashes.

The Peace Afore The Storm.

Ev'rything is quiet;
Yet, nigh comes disquiet;
For yonder is a cloud —
The heralding storm-cloud.

See, the water's roughing,
As the wind is changing;
And dark clouds the daylight,
Dim to that of twilight.

If it was otherwise,
We could escape devise;
But sorrow 'tis too late,
The degree is our fate.

The lightning and thunder,
The rain and northwester,
End in their fiercest form,
The calm before the storm.

THE STORM.

The waves are rolling fast along,
And with their white crests moan a song,
That with the pattering rain chimes,
And with whistling northwester rhymes.

Lightning plays in rapid flashes;
Thunders roar above waves splashes;
Dark as clouds the water-spouts form;
All flies southeast with wind and storm.

The fury of the storm is past;
Though washings of the waves yet last:
The sun bursts forth; the storm is by;
A rainbow forms upon the sky.

Education.

THROUGH providence we were all born without knowledge; thus education is an acquirement, and is of the utmost importance to our welfare. Without education, and specially a rational religious learning, we would degenerate; while as civilized beings, we must be educated.

Although erudition is the grandest benefaction of civilization, we can learn but little of what there is to know. We cannot all expect to be gifted to the extent of being able to learn as much as the wise, neither may we find need therefor; while only the highly educated, can form a clear conception of the vastness of the field of learning. If we would individually aim but to gain the rudiments of all knowledge, our lifetime would barely prove adequate. When we contemplate the hight of knowledge, as exemplified by the books which represent the learnings of ages, we must become amazed to think of what may be exacted of future generations; since we learn from the past for the future: yet education should never be misused, since the lesser learned who esteem and desire to learn from, the more educated, should be encouraged and not misled; and knowledge ought only serve ennobling purpose. After gaining a general education,

during our youth in the schools, we strive wisely to follow more particularly and severely, the studies belonging to the vocation we select as a means of livelihood, the success depending mostly on having a thorough knowledge of the business. Colleges, though always useful, are hardly within the average means, and are not essential for knowing something. Education ought not to be shunned because it requires an expenditure of money, for it is a beneficial and mostly remunerative investment. Money generally determines our bringing up; nevertheless, in the worldly, silly bustle to acquire money, education is too frequently neglected. Mostly social and other pleasures, sports, etc., deter the acquisition of wisdom; for they become simply pastime, teaching little or nothing, and are apt to cool the love for study; while without fondness for a thing, we lose interest therein. The wiseacre scoffs at learning; but the sagacious admire it. Education convinces, that we can and should learn more; and when we seek diversion from moiling occupations, we ought find educational amusement among the arts and sciences — music, drawing, painting, photografy, printing, sewing, cooking, etc. We do well to learn of other languages, the most useful besides English being German; however, the study of a thesaurus* is vast. We cannot argue without intelligence; while our position in life, and association with people, largely influence our erudition; and we must make efforts for progression.

* dictionary

Valentio and Desdemona.

DURING a part of the fifteenth century, there existed in northern Italy, the small dukedom, ruled by Duke Karl, who had a most beautiful, highly cultured and only daughter, by the name of Desdemona. Adjoining the domains of Duke Karl, were the lands belonging to the Duke of Savoy, whose only son Leon, was a handsome, well-proportioned, sprightly youth, fond of studies, and much respected for his goodness. No enmity had ever existed between these rival houses, and Duke Savoy would as cheerfully have accepted Desdemona for a daughter-in-law, as Duke Karl would have been delighted to have given her to Leon in marriage; since there was, as is best, little difference in their quality. Duke Savoy did not desire his son to become involved in amours; and Duke Karl reasoned wisely, that a damsel of twenty summers, ought soon become settled in matrimony; thus it was not strange, that the dukes agreed on the advisability of having their children become better acquainted with each other.

To this end Leon became a frequent guest of Duke Karl, who spared no efforts to have his daughter present during Leon's visits. Leon, then twenty-five years of age, or when it is best for a man to marry, was very attentive to Desdemona, which greatly pleased Duke Karl, who knew his daughter would not be likely to meet any other suitor her equal in nobility and wealth, and felt it to be a part of his paternal duty to encourage his daughter to such a favorable connection, as with Leon. Desdemona, however, was in deep love with Valentio, her father's favored gardener; notwithstanding, she did not wish to anger her fond

parent, by acting contrary to his aspirations, and reckoned that with coolness on her part, Leon would in time cease his courting her, and leave her free to disclose to her dear parent without angering him, her love for Valentio; but her coolness to Leon, only increased his love for her.

Desdemona, often considered the advantages of Leon above Valentio, and could not always act indifferently to him; yet her love invariably attracted her more towards Valentio, whom her loving father cherished more than his other gardeners — Provo and Toni. In form, Provo was tall and slender; while Toni was short and fat; still they were boon companions, quite frolicsome, and could not understand, why Valentio took life seriously. At one time, after trying earnestly to make Valentio join them just once in revelry, Provo and Toni heard from his own lips, that he was on his way to see his lady-love. To discover whom that could be, was but natural to Provo and Toni; thus instead of another night's drollery, they decided to shadow Valentio, and found him seated on a bench with Desdemona. The gesticulations of Provo and Toni, as they were kneeling behind some shrubs watching the cooing, their faces beaming with surprise, could not have been more comical and varied, at such a trivial, but to their vulgar senses, highly important affair. Now and then, one put his hand to his ear in a vain effort to hear what was said, and negatively shook his head to the other. They did not dare to go any nearer, but imitated the actions of the sweethearts, who soon left the scene, arm in arm, after which Provo and Toni cautiously ventured forward, and heatedly discussed the propriety of informing the duke on the morrow, of what had transpired.

The next morning Duke Karl, as he entered his study, found a letter from Leon, on his table, for his daughter, and with pleasure ordered it left on the table of her study. Provo and Toni had now arrived, and desired an audience with the duke, who thinking they wanted advice, readily granted it. Provo and Toni entered, full of hope, but were in a fix, as to who should tell the news to the duke, who noticed it, and requested Toni to speak. Toni did not wish to assume the full responsibility and said, "Provo has some information which deserves a reward," at which the duke could not refrain from laughing outright, and curiously asked to hear more. Provo did not mind to proceed, and flowingly explained, how they found Desdemona in the company of Valentio. After a close questioning, the duke became incredulous, and with a mild rebuke, ordered them to take their orders for the day, as usual, from Valentio.

They had not been gone long, when Desdemona entered with apparent glee, and informed her father, that Leon had written her, he would call at eleven o'clock. The duke thereupon expressed a wish to see the letter; but when Desdemona offered it, he desired her to read it for him, which she accordingly, but bashfully did as follows,

My Desdemona Dear — Again I long to see you. One encouraging word from your rosy lips, and I would know happiness again. I will come as near as possible at eleven A. M. In Sincerity, Leon Savoy.

The duke seemed as gratified at the note, as Desdemona, who wanted to go and await Leon's coming; but her father bid her to stay a moment; while much to her discomfort, he ordered, that Valentio report to him at once. Valentio, when he arrived, became ill at ease, and to the duke's question; if he had seen Toni or Provo the previous evening, replied, that he had, but would not join them in

sport. The duke then amazed his hearers by stating: that revenge had no chance for reward; and by requesting to know from Valentio, if he had been with his daughter in the garden the night before. Valentio looked in dismay at Desdemona, who came to his relief, by informing her father; that Valentio showed her the new flowers. The duke appeared relieved thereat; however, he doubtingly remarked, "the moon does not throw a true light on a subject," and told Valentio, to prepare for the planting of 100 blood-orange trees, which he expected would soon arrive.

Not long after Valentio left, Desdemona went to meet Leon, who then arrived in the study of her father, and after being welcomed, informed the duke, that Desdemona had met him, and promised to come very soon. In the meantime, the duke and Leon had an interesting conversation and some wine. The duke became impatient, at the length his daughter stayed away, but neatly excused her tardiness. Desdemona, then came and announced, that to Leon's honor she had prepared a repast all by herself, and at her bidding, they all proceeded to the dining-room.

'Twas midday, when Provo and Toni were resting on a bowlder in the forest, discussing their interview with the duke. Provo yet hoped for a reward; but Toni considered their prestige lessened. Valentio then met them, and after giving directions for the afternoon's work, went his way. Leon soon came along, and Provo embraced the opportunity, to offer him some valuable intelligence for a reward; but Leon was unconcerned, until Toni stated that it related to Desdemona, when the ensuing bartering, and the disclosing of Desdemona loving Valentio, was ludicrous, excepting to Leon, who promised to test their veracity, and left. Provo and Toni lamenting their ill-luck, left in another direction.

In the evening, Desdemona was in her study, when at a window, there appeared a ladder, upon which Valentio climbed into the room, much to his and Desdemona's delight. Not many minutes had passed, when Leon found access to the room, as had Valentio, and in a rage, demanded who it was, that dared to cross him in love. Desdemona was too frightened to offer an explanation, and only wrung her hands in despair. Leon, as he recognized Valentio, saw hanging on the wall, crossed as an ornament, two swords, which he instantly brought into requisition for a duel, to the horror of Desdemona. The clashings of the steel blades showed, that Leon was too excited to fence well, and it was fortunate that his sword broke, since Valentio refused the advantage. At this moment Duke Karl entered, much to the relief of his daughter, who pleaded forgiveness for her love to Valentio. Her father looked puzzled; however the general explanation which followed terminated happily, for Leon admited his error, and gratefully pledged his friendship to Valentio, who became betrothed to Desdemona.

Not many days thereafter, Desdemona and Valentio celebrated their marriage, in Duke Karl's garden. It began with a charming sunset, and was a gorgeous affair, including diverse curious dances, some about a fountain in various colors. The pretty orange-blossoms predominating, sweetly scented the air; and the full moon had risen, before the celebration ended. Dukes Karl and Savoy had cheerfully chatted together most of the time; while Leon enjoyed the company of Valentio's fair sister Olivia, whom he later wedded. The funny Provo and Toni were also present, and at last received their reward, in mirthful humiliation. Thus nobleness foils knavery, and brings great happiness.

VALENTIO AND DESDEMONA.*

(Dramatization.)

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Valentio — Chief gardener of Duke Karl.
Desdemona — Daughter of Duke Karl.
Duke Karl — Father of Desdemona.
Leon — Son of Duke Savoy.
Provo and Toni — Gardeners of Duke Karl.
Duke Savoy — Leon's father.
Olivia — Sister of Valentio and Desdemona's maid.
Attendants, dancers, etc.

Synopsis of Scenery.

ACT I
Scene I – A forest-path. Evening.
Scene II – A part of Duke Karl's garden.

ACT II
Scene I – Duke Karl's Study.
Scene II – A forest-path. Midday.

ACT III
Scene I – Desdemona's study.
Scene II – Duke Karl's Garden.

ACT I — SCENE I – A forest-path at sunset.

Enter right, Dukes Karl and Savoy.

Duke Karl,

"Here we can rest again as usual."

Sits on a stone.

Duke Savoy, (Sits on another stone.)

"It gives us relief, to take needful rest."

* For rights of performance, write to the author.

Duke Karl,

"At our age, none wait long for lasting sleep;
And we are here since we held together;
For dukedoms are oft worth naught the next day:
That our children are better acquainted,
Must long keep our little estates intact."

Duke Savoy,

"You think then, that Leon loves your daughter?"

Duke Karl,

"I noticed he is attentive to her;
And friendship readily turns into love."

Duke Savoy,

"Then friendship is the best meter of love,
But allows a variety for choice."

Duke Karl,

"'Tis always wise, to hold to friends of old,
Friends, who with the test of time, have proved worth;
And when pressed, as in political strifes,
There are few opportunities present,
That would allow us new acquaintances;
While our children are each other's equals,
And thus would make the most suitable match."

Duke Savoy,

"Your wife was not as wealthy as yourself."

Duke Karl,

"We became our equals in marriage;
And I wish all to know such happiness:
I noticed, Leon oft writes my daughter,
No doubt, tender messages from Cupid."

Duke Savoy, (arising)

"That is well; but love often surprises."

Duke Karl, (arising)
"Youth is warm; but age cools the blood and love."
Exit left, Dukes Karl and Savoy. Enter right Provo.

Provo,
"The hard seats are better fit for the young."
Exit right, Provo. Enter right, Provo and Toni.

Toni, (sitting on a rock.)
"This is a beautiful night to be out."

Provo, (walking up and down.)
"Savoy's maids will look pretty in moonlight."

Toni, (changing his seat to another rock.)
"Moon or not, to me they are always nice."

Provo,
"I see Valentio's coming this way."

Toni,
"We must try to make him join us to-night."
Enter right Valentio.

Valentio,
"Good ev'ning! Does the full moon bring you out?"

Toni,
"We sometimes get quite so full as the moon."

Provo,
"No, Toni! I never get your fulness."

Toni,
"Oh, you get your own! My fulness is mine."

Valentio,
"Such a fine ev'ning makes us feel pleasant;
And brings me out again for enjoyment."

Provo, (sitting on a rock.)
"Tis time you would join us in a night's sport."

Toni,

"The girls would make a new man out of you.
Come with us. Life is empty without joy."

Valentio,

"It may be nice, to take life so lightly,
To lose modesty and find merriment,
Or defile conscience with evil habits,
To harden the feelings against goodness,
And debase our senses and healthy blood;
But to me, life is much more serious:
I know, that the love of but one woman,
Is to me the sweeter for purity.
I have found her for whom I have kept pure;
And this night I will meet my lady-love.
Enjoy yourselves, and excuse me. Good night."

Exit left Valentio.

Provo,

"The same as ever, and mind he's in love."

Toni, (getting up.)

"Indeed Provo! Think you he's in earnest?"

Provo, (arising)

"'Tis no joke to be in love. We must see,
Who has struck his fancy. Let's follow him."

Exit left, Provo and Toni.

ACT I SCENE II A part of Duke Karl's garden in full moon.

Enter right Valentio.

Valentio,

"Desdemona seems to me somewhat late.
Ofcourse, she will arrive in a minute."

Looks left whence he expects her to come.

Valentio, (coming forward.)

"No! She appears not yet. Oft I wonder,
Whether Leon's frequent visits of late,
Are not connected with Desdemona.
Oh! That we could speak, as we have the mind,
And thus be free from love's uncertainty.

(Enter left Desdemona, who listens.)

When born we cause parents anxiety,
And begin the battle for existence.
We pass ills only to meet some others,
That embitter the intervals of joy.
Glory and riches, often pass away,
For we cannot master our destiny;
Thus sometimes our ambitions are thwarted."

Desdemona,

"Oh! Do not talk so melancholy strain,
Don't women suffer more for joy than men?
And yet I think, that joy does sweeten ills.
How can you be unhappy and love me?"

Valentio,

"I adore you, yet know not happiness,
Since you will not promise to marry me."

Desdemona,

"I promise it, but must entreat patience.
Await but the time and all will be well."

Valentio, takes her hands in his own and gently giving her a kiss, they seat themselves on a bench.

Valentio,

"Truly virtue receives good recompense;
And we triumph in not giving up faith."

Enter right, Provo and Toni, who creep behind some shrubs, and watch Valentio and Desdemona.

Desdemona, (arising.)

"Let us go. I like not to tarry here ;
And would rather proceed to my study."

Valentio, (getting up.)

"I could not give you cause to regret it."

Exit left, Valentio and Desdemona, arm in arm.

Provo and Toni, cautiously come forward.

Toni,

"'Twas Valentio and Desdemona."

Provo,

"Certainly! And just think of such outrage.
We must inform the duke of this event."

Toni,

"Alas! I think it would hurt his feelings."

Provo,

"Fool! The duke will give us reward therefor."

Toni,

"Reward? Did you say reward? Then be it."

Provo,

"Why yes! We will tell him in the morning."

Toni,

"And be more merry with the girls to-night."

Exit right, Provo and Toni.

ACT II — SCENE I – The study-room of Duke Karl.

Duke Karl enters, sits at his table, and examines some letters.

Duke Karl,

"This note from Leon for Desdemona,
I think, must be about the sixth this month.
Last month he sent her only three letters ;

Which shows, that Leon has doubled his love."

Rings a bell, for an attendant who enters.

Duke Karl,

"Put this note on Desdemona's table."

Exit attendant.

Duke Karl,

"Leon is very regardful to her;
And yet Duke Savoy is quite right in that,
We should not think our wishes are fulfilled,
Until we know it for a certainty."

Enter a servant who announces, Provo and Toni.

Duke Karl,

"Show them in; perhaps they seek some advice."

Enter Provo and Toni, who appear somewhat shy.

Duke Karl,

"Well Toni! Out with it, speak unreserved."

Toni,

"Provo has some news which deserves reward."

Duke Karl,

"Ha! Ha! Be free Provo; let me hear it."

Provo,

"'Twas in the moonlight last night that we found,
Both Desdemona and Valentio,
Seated in company in the garden."

Toni,

"Yes Sir! For we knew them in the moonlight."

Duke Karl,

"You recognized them; but did they see you?"

Provo,

"Oh no sir! We did not venture so near."

Duke Karl,

"Then you have only seen them from the back;
You cannot make hatred where there is love.
Go, and mind orders from Valentio."

Exit Provo and Toni. Enter Desdemona.

Desdemona,

"Leon wrote he would call at eleven."

Duke Karl,

"That will be soon. Let me see the missive."

Desdemona offers the note.

Duke Karl,

"It is neatly written. Read it for me."

Desdemona, (reads)

My Desdemona Dear — Again I long to see you. One encouraging word from your rosy lips, and I would know happiness again. I will come as near as possible at eleven A. M. In Sincerity, Leon Savoy.

Desdemona,

"I will go and await him at the gate."

Duke Karl,

"Stay a moment: it will interest you."

Rings bell for a servant who enters.

Duke Karl,

"Valentio is to report at once."

Exit servant. Enter Valentio.

Duke Karl,

"Did you see Provo and Toni last night?"

Valentio,

"Yes sir. I refused to join them in sport."

Duke Karl,

"Surely revenge has no chance for reward:
But was you with Desdemona last night?"

Desdemona,
"Valentio showed me the new flowers."

Duke Karl,
"The moon throws not true light on a subject.
I expect one hundred blood-orange trees.
Go, prepare that they grace the main entrance."

Exit Valentio.

Desdemona,
"Leon must be coming. I will meet him."

Duke Karl,
"Very well. Go show him the new flowers."

Exit Desdemona.

Duke Karl, (musing)
"The capriciousness of woman is great.
Now I know that she loves Valentio;
But still Leon's coming seems to please her."

An attendant announces Leon who enters.

Duke Karl, (shaking Leon's hand)
"Good hail Leon. Did you meet my daughter?"

Leon, (taking a seat)
"Aye duke, and she promised soon to be here."

Duke Karl,
"She awaited your coming with delight,
No doubt, she now puts on her finery;
Thus women like to please the men they love."

Leon,
"She pleases me in many other ways;
Yet she mostly seems quite cool in manners."

Duke Karl,
"Tis only due to maiden modesty;
And woman is more precious when modest."

(Duke Karl, pouring out some wine)

"The evil of wine, lies in its misuse;
But a little does one good. Health Leon."

Leon, (taking a goblet)

" Health duke, and also to Desdemona."

Duke Karl,

"Aye! She seems to stay away somewhat long:
But women are not always punctual."

Desdemona, (entering)

"I have just prepared a little repast,
To honor Leon. Come let's enjoy it."

Duke Karl, (getting up)

"Come Leon. Lunch from whom we love, tastes best."

All Exit.

ACT II SCENE II A forest path at midday.

Enter left, Provo and Toni.

Toni, (seating himself on a tree-stump)

"No, no, Provo! There's no reward getting."

Provo, (sitting on a log)

"'Tis silly to give up hope and courage."

Toni,

"Yes! But no doubt we have lost some favor."

Provo,

"Brace up Toni, here comes Valentio."

Toni,

"Azooks! He will give us reward therefor."

Valentio, (entering right)

"There are some holes to dig this afternoon,
For one hundred trees at the main entrance.
Be not disheartened, as I will aid you."

Exit left Valentio.

Toni,
"Alack Provo! 'Tis reward for goodness."
Provo,
"You irritating fool, here comes Leon.
Know that he will reward us for the news."
Toni,
"So! O yes! Ofcourse he will reward us."
Leon, (entering right)
"Hail thee gardeners! Know you any news?"
Provo,
"Of great import deserving of reward."
Leon,
"Oh, in that case you may withhold the news."
Toni,
"But its relating to Desdemona."
Leon,
"To Desdemona? Speak, my purse rewards."
Toni,
"We wish no money, but some of your wine."
Provo,
"The vintage from the vines back on the hill."
Leon,
"Ha! There is very little of it left."
Toni,
"That little will make us tell you the news."
Leon,
"Very well, if its enough, it is yours."
Provo,
"Valentio and fair Desdemona,
We saw seated together like sweethearts."

Leon,
"It seems you do not like Valentio;
But when I see it, I will believe it."
Leon exit left. Provo and Toni arise to leave.

Toni,
"This reward-getting is a poor business."

Provo,
"Be not discouraged, for my heart yet beats."
Both exit right.

ACT III — SCENE I – Study-room of Desdemona.

Desdemona,
"I feel very tired Olivia:
You may go and prepare for retirement."
Exit Olivia.

Desdemona, (putting out a few candles)
"This is a world of great perplexity;
Since we know not what the next moment brings.
If father knew, I loved Valentio,
Would he, or would he not, give his consent,
For us to marry? It would anger him.
(ladder-top appears at window)
No, I have not the courage to tell him."

Valentio, (entering from the ladder)
"My Desdemona dear, I love you so."
(they embrace and sit down)

Valentio,
"It may be best, if I ask your father,
To give his consent for us to marry."

Desdemona,
"Do wait, later it may not anger him."

Leon, (entering from the window)

"Ho! Who is it, that dares to cross my love?
Valentio! You love Desdemona?

(takes swords from the wall)

Take choice. These ornaments shall serve our use."

Valentio, (complying)

"Honor, not will, forces me to accept."

(They fence until Leon's sword breaks.)

Duke Karl, (appearing at the door)

"This seems a duel for Desdemona."

Desdemona, (kneeling before her parent)

"Forgive me, since I love Valentio,
And I have pledged myself to marry him."

Leon,

"And I pledge Valentio my friendship.
He clearly won, and proved of noble stock;
For when he had the best of advantage,
He cast it aside. Congratulate him."

Duke Karl,

"Thus you seem to ask of my approval,
And my heart must bend. Congratulations."

(The heads of Provo and Toni appear at the window.)

ACT III SCENE II Duke Karl's Garden near the Fountain.

Table with fruits and wine and seats and 2 attendants to the left. Fountain in the background. Illuminations with colored lights. 2 Guards and 12 Dancers.

Enter, arm in arm, talking, —
Valentio and Desdemona, Dukes Karl and Savoy, Leon and Olivia, and Provo and Toni, seating themselves at the table.

Duke Karl,

"A father, on the day his daughter weds,
May be excused for a little spending;
Thus my welcome guests this celebration."

Duke Savoy,

"It gives me supreme pleasure to be here,
May the young couple live happy and true."

(All drink to the toast.)

Duke Karl,

"Dancers will now amuse us for awhile."

(Ballet.)

Duke Karl,

"Provo and Toni, I will reward you;
I meant to discharge you, but will keep you."

Provo,

"Thank you, I will remember the kindness."

Toni,

"Many thanks duke, 'tis reward for goodness."

Leon,

"Provo and Toni, I must inform you:
The wine you bargained for is yours but sour."

Duke Karl,

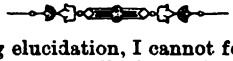
"More dancing, and the entertainment ends."

(Ballet.)

Chorus,

"O so jolly, jolly the time went by;
And the time which comes, may it happy be,
As the time which goes by, without a sigh."

Curtain.



NOTE — The space allowing elucidation, I cannot forbear a few remarks. This play is written in the meter of ten syllables to the line. The Italian costumes of the fifteenth century are always interesting; while the few characters represented require thespians of merit; and the scenery leaves naught to be desired for elaborate staging. Of the ballet, my taste would be, to have half clothed light, the rest dark. It is my firm belief, that virtue is rewarded, even if only in the prevention of evils; which is the moral of Valentio and Desdemona.

The Eagle.

O the eagle, lovely eagle,
How it moves high up in the air.
See'st yon tiny speck in the sky ?
'Tis an eagle, golden eagle.

There the eagle, beaut'ous eagle,
Loftily as the clouds themselves,
With graceful movements in fine curves,
Flies the eagle, pretty eagle.

Comes the eagle, noble eagle,
Dropping from above to lone pine ;
Where among its highest branches,
Perch'd the eagle, tired eagle.

There the eagle, resting eagle,
Causes uproar among townfolks ;
Who too quickly motives mistake,
See an eagle, preyful eagle.

But the eagle, wise good eagle,
Needing rest cares naught for clamor ;
And at silly townfolks' actions,
Looks the eagle, roosting eagle.

Calm the eagle, stoic eagle,
Sits amid the high treetop green ;
Not when the men with their guns come,
Moves the eagle, lonely eagle.

And the eagle, unmov'd eagle,
Braves with dignity defiance ;
Then with a wild and mocking scream,
Soars the eagle : farewel eagle.

In the Shades of Night.

THE day in October, had been clear and pleasant, when near its close, I stood not far from where the waters of New York Harbor splash the most southerly part of Manhattan Island, known as the Battery.* Before me lay one of the finest harbors in the world : a harbor that is the more dear to many travelers, for ending a hazardous ocean journey. To my right lay Jersey City, behind which the golden sun hung low in the western sky : and southerly, in the distance, I beheld the hills of Staten Island ; while in the east, buildings of Brooklyn, cast their curious shapes against the gray mist. In front of me lay Governors Island, used for a military station ; and towards the west, the Statue of Liberty † on Bedloes Island, reminded me, that there are also republics in Europe ; while nearby on Ellis Island, I could discern the immigrant buildings.

Boom ! A shot from a cannon near Castle William on Governors Island, indicated a salute to sunset.‡ The twilight following was not of long duration ; and various colored lights on buildings, quays and boats, glimmered through the shades of night. The light of the crescent moon reflected in a dazzling manner, from the ruffles of the water, when I turned about for a walk in the streets of " Old Knikerboker," in the shades of night. From the

* From the historical fact, that the Dutch of New Amsterdam had at this place planted and manned a battery against a British Fleet, before the Duke of York gained control, and changed the name to New York, in 1664.

† A present from the French, made by Bartholdi, unveiled 1886. ‡ This is an old custom, due to the realization, that for some it may be the last sunset.

park, called Battery, the site of a fort during the Dutch and English reigns, I emerged upon Bowling Green, where the first citizens played nine-pins,* and where stood the leaden statue of King George III, which was utilized for bullets, by the patriots of the American Revolution. Here begins Broadway, on which I had gone only a short distance when I came to "Ye Church of ye Olden Tyme," known as Trinity Church, and facing Wall Street, the great financial center of the new world. The investor, who has lost his money, can find a solace, at the sight of "Old Trinity" and as he sees the advancing hands on the clock in the tower, he can realize that the past is dead; and that if he cannot forget, he is taught by christianity to forgive. So here I stood where in the daytime all is hustle and bustle after money; while in the shades of night, all is quiet excepting on Sylvester night, when people come to hear the chimes from the bells of the Church of Trinity, ring in the new year. As I passed Wall St., which has its name from being the position of a stone wall that protected the first settlers from the encroachment of the Indians, I reasoned that it is well, that we protect ourselves from physical dangers; but that we should also secure ourselves from moral ills.

I proceeded up Broadway, which was once the promenade of the early citizens, whose villas lined its route, but which long since, has become a business thoroughfare, crowded with people in the day-time, but almost deserted in the shades of night. Soon I came to another old church, that of St. Paul; and then I recollected the different picture hereabouts, at the time of my boyhood. The hundreds of telegraph wires, suspended from numerous lofty poles,

* The game of skittles, now mostly played with ten pins, and called ten-pins.

are now all placed in underground conduiets; instead of omnibuses there are cars; the old gas lights in the streets are replaced by electric ones; and mostly tall buildings, familiarly styled "skyscrapers," and mostly of beautiful architectural design, have taken the places of the smaller old fashioned, nevertheless more roomy structures.

Such a decided change, in twenty years, would have made me stare in amazement, had I not seen the gradual development. In the shades of night, I came to the statue of the typical Franklin, at Printing House Square, where in the presses of the many newspaper buildings about, lay many a germ of education; and where in the streets newsboys vied wildly, in the competition of a rather too early livelihood at news-paper-selling: however I did not long stay at this more lively neighborhood, and soon was strolling along old Chatam St., now called Park Row, and on the wide historic Bowery, in the shades of night.

In the habits of its frequenters, these thoroughfares are as much alike as in their stores and jumbles of amusement, being a veritable highway for the "Cheap Johns" and the "Come Ons".* In the day-time, a jostling of a multitude of business people, in the shades of night, mostly crowded with pleasure-seekers, and some at their worst, the Bowery presents an avenue, such as can only be met with, in the greater cities of our globe. As I came nearer to Cooper Institute, founded by Peter Cooper the philantropist, for the furtherance of science and art, I discerned on its clock, that it was relevant, for me to say good-night.

* A cheap-john, is a person who hunts for a bargain and gets one: whereas a come-on, always looks for bargains, and is imposed upon.

Some of my Book Friends.

There are always some tomes, which stand out from the others, majestically, like a pine in a forest; and they are striking, for their literary beauty, diversity, wisdom, educational and economical qualities, besides the entertainment they afford, viz — Cervantes' Don Quixote, Works of Shakespeare, Le Sage's Gil Blas, and Quo Vadis by Sienkiewicz, which are a fit foundation for any library.

Then, the elegant, flowing and expressive Works of Goldsmith and of Cooper, are suitably followed by Longfellow's Poems, Essays of Bacon, and Irving's Works. These are books, which anyone cannot only profitably read, but also study to advantage. For their clearer comprehension, a Webster's Dictionary and the Grammars of Harvey and of Swinton, are indispensable. Further could be recommended, Anderson's General History, (for brevity,) the Eclectic History of the United States, by Thalheimer, Ritter's History of Music, and the History of the United States Mint by Evans. Several text-books are also valuable, specially, Wood's Natural History, Greenleaf's School Arithmetic, Elementary Lessons in Astronomy by Lockyer, Steele's Chemistry and Natural Philosophy, Botany by Gray, and Harper's large School Geography. For general information, the National Encyclopedia, (popular edition) is the most compact.

Readers, with their miscellaneous selections, allow a choice among other authors, desirable ones being, Harper's, Harvey's, Holmes' and Willson's, fifth readers, and Anderson's Historical Reader.

A Manual of Law and Business Forms, by Haigh, is well worthy of perusal ; while the Physiology of Hotze, teaches us the make-up of mankind ; whose bodily ills, the Domestic Physician, by Hering, my godfather, often alleviates. Of biographies, Audubon's Life, is a charming naration, illustrating adventuresome persistence, required by the naturalist ; whereas the Life of Cleveland, Sage of Princeton, to whom is dedicated Multitopics, since he has shown the sincerity and debonairity of true greatness, is a rising revelation of a man.

Mr. Flemer and his Mule.

MR. Flemer was a blacksmith by trade, and a farmer by necessity; whom I knew from my boyhood; when incidently, I became acquainted with the habits of his mule; of which I am about to write, and do vouch for, to be the most accurate information, that could now be procured on the subject. Mr. Flemer did not only get a mixture of donkey and horse because it did not meager his purse as much as the price of a horse would have done; but also since he needed an animal which could better take care of itself, than a horse, while he was occupied in laboriously wiping out debts, at the anvil of his smithy.

Well, Mr. Flemer got just the thing he wanted; at least he did not consider it meet to admit otherwise: and it is wise to content ourselves, with what we cannot change.

It was a sprightly mule, that like any other creature, became rather exhilarated in the pure Orange Mountain air near Warrenville, New Jersey. Mr. Flemer told me the mule proved very saving, and would eat almost anything, from shoestrings to a corset. I was somewhat incredulous; though when I saw the beast gnaw at a grind-stone, I was willing to believe it. The mule had not been in harness much, I presumed, for Mr. Flemer said, he must have strapped it on too tight the first and last time, since about a fortnight that I had seen him, for it broke allover. At one time, Mr. Flemer rode the mule only a few seconds, before he became enlightened to the style of a back-somerset. Mr. Flemer thought it a joke on the mule, and I acknowledge, that was the most philosophical manner of taking it. At another time, Mr. Flemer hitched the mule to his wagon with stronger harness, and started for the village of Bound Brook, distant nearly three miles.

'Tis childlike to amuse ourselves at the dilemmas of others; yet, the neighbors had congregated, to see Mr. Flemer and his mule start off, in full expectation of the gratification of their propensity to fun. At the gate, the mule would go no further; and Mr. Flemer talked to the beast, and patted its neck. One old rustic, I heard say: 'twas as useless to argue with a prejudiced voter or a contumacious woman, as with a mule: and I since found, he spoke from keen knowledge. However, the mule, much to the amusement of its driver, and to the chagrin of the disappointed spectators, acted more reasonably than some persons, and away sped Mr. Flemer. The neighbors were on hand, to welcome him, when he was expected to come back: and I myself, took a rocky seat, nigh a lightning blast oak, on a hilltop, and cultivated valuable patience.

Then I heard the vociferations, of a voice I recognized as that of Mr. Flemer, who, as he came along, told me, the mule was allright, and worth every bit a horse: albeit I saw the foolishness of boasting, when at the foot of the hill, the mule went through a zig-zag fence, for a thistle, and back on the road again, where it stood quiet. I had run down nearby, and thought Mr. Flemer appeared anxious; but I said he could drive on, that I would set up the fence again.

Mr. Flemer soon exhausted his vocabulary, yet the mule stood still. Next I saw Mr. Flemer alight from the wagon, and cut a switch; but like some people, the mule anticipated evil, and there remained only Mr. Flemer running along that part of the highway. Moved by pity, I no sooner finished my self-imposed task, than sprinting on the road I soon overtook the breathless Mr. Flemer, who said, he was afraid the mule would run into something, and so it did; though it was only the wagon-shed. In a few seconds, the mule was free, and its antics, kept the neighbors from

venturing near. Mrs. Flemer remarked, the mule had at least sense enough to get home before her husband; this however, was no detrimental reflection on Mr. Flemer, as he was truly good-natured, and possessed of an enviable equanimity. As we learn more with time, so Mr. Flemer learned to know more about his mule. Unlike numerous specimens of humanity, the mule appreciated friendship, and thus it was no wonder, that Mr. Flemer and the mule were often out late at night. This did not last long, and the neighbors gossiped that Mrs. Flemer must have lectured the mule; since Mr. Flemer when bound homeward, had to resort to noise producing devices, to make the mule go; which was highly distasteful to Mr. Flemer as he could no longer get home without letting people know, that he was coming. Once as I sat on a branch of an apple-tree, enjoying of the tart though delicious fruit around me, I heard a clamor like the beating on a tinned iron dish-pan.

That was Mr. Flemer making the mule go. At another time my attention was attracted by a loud rattling, and as everybody else nearby, I knew, that Mr. Flemer was coming from the village. One pleasant evening, the stillness was broken by cow-bells, but they sounded from some cows in a meadow. It seemed to me remarkable, that whereas patience is frequently shown to some people without avail, the patient efforts of Abner Flemer, finally made the mule prove entirely satisfactory.

A BEAR TALE.

Once upon a time, there were three bears — two large and old, and one young and small. The elder two, covetous of the nectar of a hive, induced the little bear, to join them in their raid upon the tempting treacle; but when the bees resented the intrusion, with their stings, the larger bears saved their own hides, by leaving the younger bear, to battle with the bees. This tends to show that, among people too, the little inexperienced fellow, should be more careful and just.

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AT THE GATE.

He stood talking to her at the gate,
The old man recall'd he call'd her Kate,
But that was back many years ago,
When in green years he could better go.

Now his limbs are weak, his hair is white,
Though memory brought him back the site,
Where spoke a youth to her at the gate,
He fancied yet, he heard him say Kate.

But the bud of womanhood faded,
Droop'd, was no more, and to him shaded,
Life he hoped for with her at the gate,
Where lives the hermit who call'd her Kate.

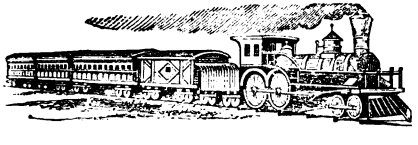
A CATASTROPHE.

The railroad-station of a town, was more crowded than usually, on this occasion, because of a holiday. Most of the people, were awaiting relations or friends; some had baggage or satchels, and as anxiously awaited the train, which was due in a few minutes, as the rest. Some parties expected to be taken to their various destinations, bent on friendly visits, for it was no business day; others awaited friends or relations, no doubt the more dearly, for the long interval since a previous visit.

Many persons who appeared on the station-platform, carried lovely bouquets for their dear ones. A pretty Miss, who hardly could have passed her teens, seemed as unconscious of her surroundings, as if in love, and held in her hands, a bunch of beautiful flowers, no doubt for her

"brother." Here, an elderly poetical looking gentleman, carried a large number of white La France roses, perhaps for a married daughter; while there, it seemed, a well-matured lady thought deeply, maybe of a son. Nearly all appeared happy in pleasant anticipation of meeting their beloved; and pretty as pictures, merry young folks chatted and laughed. The train was due; nevertheless it arrived not; and the minutes flew along. The day had been clear and agreeable, but a dark cloud appeared in the west and the scene changed. Why did the people anxiously crowd about the station-master? He had given notice that the train was wrecked, and could not yield to entreaties for nearer news, for he knew it not. The most people expected their dear ones harmed. Had they deserved it, or had they lost their faith? Truly calamity tests our belief.

A train had come rumbling to the station: and it had brought the surviving, injured and dead. Newsboys had already, extras of the disaster; and increasing crowds were kept back by extra patrols. The deceased were laid on the platform; and the maimed hurried away in ambulances, to different hospitals. Pathetic were the scenes of recognition; heartrending, the identification of the killed. The elderly gentleman was seen, to kneel in prayer, divide his roses among the suffering, and in tears of thankfulness, to leave the scene, with his daughter and grandchild. The melancholy damsel, looked the more sweet, in tears of joy, as she went away with her fiance. Of all horrors, kind reader, deserve trust in the Almighty, that thy tears of sorrow, turn to tears of gratefulness and happiness.



A CRY OF NIGHT.

AS I wander'd about the woods at night ;
And near me heard the bat's and night-bird's flight :
As the wind rustled the dry leaves nearby ;
My lone musing was broken by a cry.

Could it be that in this night of darkness ;
My ears really heard a sound so heartless :
As nearby dry leaves were rustled by wind ;
Or was it the whim of sensitive mind ?

I stopp'd to wander, stood still and listen'd ;
I saw where the will-o-the-wisp glisten'd :
Certainly my ears did not deceive me ;
Yet all was quiet, nor ill could I see.

I had heard gurgling and gasping for breath ;
Or I heard nothing in the forest's breadth :
But God, Master of all, I'm glad 'tis well ;
You owe me no evil, that I can tell.

Just then the woods' stillness became ended,
With a soul-stirring screaming that blended,
In a gasping and gurgling the most weird ;
That would awe the bravest who ever heard.

It was not a sinner by rope dangling ;
Nor was it a villain busy strangling ;
But a bird that makes such a gruesome howl,
And though very handsome, is nam'd screech-owl.

End of Part First, Volume One.

AUTHOR'S NOTICE.

For convenience, Multitopics will be issued in nine parts, of which the first is herewith presented. I did it all myself, and will not do it again. The edition consists of a hundred copies. I have a few copies at $ 1.— and others, bound to order, at $ 3.— or $ 5.— Their sale would not repay my labors, but aid the publication of the next parts. When complete, I expect a volume consisting of three smaller ones of three parts each, which I provide for separate binding, since some years must elaspe before completion. I am thankful for criticisms, and not adverse to consider offers of other publishers, however please do not all write at once. Future Multitopics will include among others —

Castles of Germany, Truth,
The Conflagration,(Chicago 1871)
Sympathy, The Great Spirit,
The Woodman and the Oak,
Pride, A Spectre of the Night,
Julius Cæsar, Moderation,
A Signal of Distress, An Album,
Finance, The Country Fair,
The Hunter and the Bear, Love,
A Hall of Fame, The Trapper,
Friendship, Hist! Learning,
The Play of, The Four Seasons,
Music, The Farmer's Daughter,
An Ogdoastich, Temperance,
The Spectre-Dog, John Seitz,
Health, A Prayer, Superstition,
The Weather, The Life-Saver,
Revery in the Mountains, Books,
The Exodus, Two Pictures,
A Library, Nature, The Brook,
Respect, A Letter, Marriage,
A Keepsake Shovel, The Scold,
Politeness, A Weed, Games,
Business, Jealousy, Farming,
Glory, Relations, Poetry, Etc.